

and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 614) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

TAXPAYER FIRST ACT OF 2019— Continued

H.R. 1957

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, as we continue our debate today on the Great American Outdoors Act, I thought I would come to the floor one more time to talk about the benefits of this historic conservation package and what it means for the great State and the people of Colorado.

Several years back, this Congress worked in a bipartisan fashion to pass legislation by Senator SHAHEEN and me that required the Commerce Department, for the first time in our country's history, to break out the outdoor economy as a part of our economic numbers, to determine how many jobs this country had in the outdoor industry in recreation, and to determine the overall revenues generated by the recreation economy. What we discovered was what we knew intuitively: that the recreation economy is a huge part of jobs in this country, with over 5 million jobs.

In Colorado, you are looking at about a \$28 billion part of our economy. If I could, I just want to talk a little bit more about what that means for Colorado and what this bill means as applied to our State, the benefits environmentally of this legislation and the economic impact it will have.

I talked on the floor about the Great Sand Dunes National Park. Right around the year 2000, this legislation turned this national monument into a national park. Hundreds of thousands of people come to the valley to visit every year. What is neat about this is that it is not just a national park, the Great Sand Dunes National Park, but it is also an example of how the Land and Water Conservation Fund works together because it established the Great Sand Dunes National Park to make sure that the water resource was protected that is so instrumental to keeping the sand dunes in place. We used the Land and Water Conservation Fund to purchase elements of land around it, like the Baca Ranch and Zapata Ranch and other areas, to make sure we had this great resource maintained for future generations to come.

Of course, Rocky Mountain National Park is the third most heavily visited park in the Nation. Almost 5 million visitors come to Rocky Mountain National Park every year. A few years

back, there were 2.8, 3 million people. We have almost doubled the visitors in recent times, which has caused a lot of challenges for Rocky Mountain National Park. It has benefited as well from the Land and Water Conservation Fund because some of the last remaining inholdings within Rocky Mountain National Park have been purchased using the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

If you look at the Restore Our Parks Act, the money in the Great American Outdoors Act that will go toward catching up with the maintenance backlog, this park has about \$85 million worth of needs in terms of that backlog. It has \$85 million worth of projects, from visitors centers to roads and trails.

Let me show you one of those trails right here. You can see this is what it looked like. You can see the erosion and washouts. This is what happens over time with heavy use and weather.

You can see the work we have been able to do to maintain and to catch up with the needs in Rocky Mountain National Park. We can do this across our Park System thanks to the Restore Our Parks Act. We will put \$1.9 billion a year—paid for by oil and gas revenues—into our national parks to catch up with the maintenance and backlog needs at places like Rocky Mountain National Park.

It is \$85 million in Rocky Mountain National Park. It is \$7 to \$8 million in the Great Sand Dunes National Park. In Mesa Verde National Park, it is almost \$75 million. I will show you Black Canyon of the Gunnison right now. Black Canyon of the Gunnison is in need of nearly \$7 to \$8 million as well for its backlog needs.

This is a picture I actually took on my iPhone. This is a picture I had taken while attending a press conference to celebrate a Land and Water Conservation Fund purchase. You can see Park Superintendent Noble is pointing across the canyon to the land that was purchased using the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The canyon is right here. It is not over the horizon; it is right here. This land was on the rim of the canyon. It was not a part of the park. You can imagine, if somebody had decided to build something there and said "Why don't we develop that? Why don't we do something else?" what that would have meant to the national park and enjoyment of that park. Using this, they were able to get the entire rim of the canyon for the National Park System. That is where that is.

If you go to this next picture, you see it is not just about national parks. The Great American Outdoors Act is not just about Land and Water Conservation Fund. It is about our forests. It is about our national forests, our Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife, and it is about the Bureau of Indian Education.

This is actually a national monument. This is Dinosaur National Monu-

ment. If you go to Northern Colorado, Dinosaur National Monument straddles both the State of Colorado and the State of Utah. Some of the best white water rafting in the country goes through Dinosaur National Monument. This is amazing. This is absolutely cool.

You can see these archaeologists who are actually hanging on to a wall as they do their work. This is known as the fossil wall. Hundreds of millions of years' worth of fossils are in this long wall at Dinosaur National Monument. You can see the fossils and the bones in this picture, layer after layer. It is a remarkable resource in one of the most truly unique areas of Colorado. The needs here are tremendous, too, as they face erosion and challenges from visitors and access needs to some of these resources.

If you go to Mesa Verde National Park, this is truly spectacular. If you look at Mesa Verde—for those who never had a chance to go there, I hope people will have a chance to visit. This park was established in 1906. Look at this beautiful ridge. Look at the plateau. Look at the cliff dwellings. It is remarkable. It was established in 1906 to preserve and interpret the archaeological heritage of the ancestral Pueblo people who made it their home for over 700 years. The park protects nearly 5,000 known archaeological sites, including 600 cliff dwellings—some of the best and most notable preserved dwellings in the United States.

In 2019, they had about 556,000 visitors. This is in the Four Corners area of the State, surrounded by towns like Cortez, CO; Mancas, CO; Durango, CO—areas that rely on tourism and recreation and farming and ranching for their jobs.

In 2018, visitors spent about \$58 million in these local gateway regions. This supported nearly 1,000 jobs, \$22 million in labor income, \$40 million in value added, and about \$72 million in economic help in the gateway economy surrounding the Mesa Verde National Park. They operate about \$700 million worth of facilities, and they have about 10 percent of that in need of deferred maintenance. So \$76 million is their total deferred maintenance needs.

They need to rehabilitate the Chapin Mesa Civilian Conservation Corps. They need to replace the water, electric, information, and sewer systems. They need to replace the campground, water, and road systems. They need to improve the historic maintenance operations buildings. That is just some of the need at Mesa Verde National Park.

When we talk about the Great American Outdoors Act, we talk about national parks, national forests, and BLM land and monuments, but we should also talk about recreation, because so many times this gets lost in our conversation on the floor, because it is not only recreation in terms of parks and the National Forest Service, but it is sports complexes, baseball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts—the ability for

States to determine how to use these dollars. It is not just the Federal Government that takes all of this money; 40 percent goes back to the States.

This is in Runyon Park in Pueblo, CO, another southern Colorado city. Look how beautiful that is and the work we can do with the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Look at the total economic impact. I think it is important that we recognize that before coronavirus, we were working on the Great American Outdoors Act, this package that presented two great American values: the crown jewel of our conservation program, the Restore Our Parks Act, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, to catch up with our maintenance backlog, both of which are paid for by oil and gas revenues. We talked about them, and we talked about how good it would be for our environment and the conservation and preservation for future generations. We also acknowledged, then, that there was a great economic benefit. We talked about the numbers. We talked about the recreation economy. But now that economic benefit becomes even more important because the first industries that were hit by the shelter-in-place orders and the economic shutdowns were the travel industry, hotels, restaurants, tourism, outfitters, and ski areas. In Colorado, they closed down the ski areas months ahead of time. The summer recreation start has been delayed because of lingering effects of phases in restoring our economy. So the economic benefits of the Great American Outdoors Act become all the more important.

Some of the hardest hit communities by the coronavirus in Colorado in the first wave have some of the highest unemployment levels in the State. Hotels emptied early, and restaurants emptied early. But this bill will create thousands and thousands of jobs, according to a report that was just released by the National Park Service. In Colorado, thousands of jobs will be created—in Colorado alone.

Look at the Land and Water Conservation Fund. For every \$1 million spent in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, it supports between 16 and 30 jobs. Support for 16 to 30 jobs—do you know what that means in a community that may have 20 to 22 percent unemployment? Surrounded by public lands, the Great American Outdoors Act will help to put them to work while doing what we love in Colorado, and that is protecting our environment. If you look at the overall numbers that the National Park Service provided, we are going to create and help to support over 100,000 jobs through this legislation, and, again, this is legislation that is paid for through oil and gas revenues.

It was a commonsense approach back in 1965 when the Land and Water Conservation Fund was put together so that we access one resource. We deplete a resource in oil and gas. They pay a severance tax and royalty to the Fed-

eral Government, and the Federal Government turns around and uses that to protect our other resources in other areas, national parks and national forests. That is what the bill does through the Great American Outdoors Act. It creates opportunity.

John Gayle, conservation director of the Backcountry Hunters & Anglers and a Colorado resident says: “The Great American Outdoors Act not only creates permanent certainty for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, America’s most successful conservation and access program, it also ensures sound stewardship of our public lands and waters.”

Carlos Fernandez, Colorado State director of the Nature Conservancy says:

The Great American Outdoors Act is critical to Colorado’s recovery from this crisis.

Of course, he is talking about COVID-19.

Our mountains, trails, fields and streams have been a welcome respite for many during the pandemic, but local economies have struggled. Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and investing in our national parks will put Coloradans back to work, protecting important landscapes, investing in their care, and creating more outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the State. These are time-tested, effective investments in conservation that will strengthen Colorado’s economy and amazing outdoors.

Larry Selzer, the president and CEO of the Conservation Fund said that the “momentum to bring a vote on the Great American Outdoors Act to the Senate floor is critical to the future vitality of America. Advancing legislation in both houses to fully fund LWCF, as well as to address the maintenance backlog on our public lands, is a huge step to support our public lands and rekindle and grow local outdoors and recreation economies.”

Will Shafroth, president and CEO of the National Park Foundation—Will’s family is legendary in Colorado politics—says this:

The National Park Foundation is thrilled that the Great American Outdoors Act is moving closer to becoming law. Years in the making, this bipartisan bill would go a long way toward addressing the critical maintenance needs of our national parks. With the funds made available through this bill, we will ensure that these special places are even more special, remain accessible to all Americans, and continue to serve as economic engines for local communities.

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership:

The Great American Outdoors Act is smart conservation. Senate passage of this historic and bipartisan bill will improve our natural resources and enhance access for American hunters and anglers. It also makes lasting investments in our outdoor recreation economy at a time when we need to get Americans back to work.

Benji Backer, president and founder of the American Conservation Coalition:

Our national parks and public lands are part of our heritage as Americans. By protecting and investing in them we will ensure that generations to come will benefit from

America’s best idea. The American Conservation Coalition is proud to support the Great American Outdoors Act because it will protect this heritage and support the hundreds of thousands of Americans whose livelihoods are connected to our national parks.

This list goes on and on, from the Archery Trade Association to the Outdoor Industry Association. The Outdoor Industry Association said:

The outdoor industry applauds the U.S. Senate for seizing the opportunity to pass the Great American Outdoors Act, a landmark piece of bipartisan legislation. Along with the social and health benefits that being outdoors provides, there is also a strong economic case for doing this now. The outdoors are bipartisan, and investing in LWCF means investing in local economies and creating thousands of jobs, both of which we desperately need right now to help the country bounce back from COVID-19.

There is the Corps Network, the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, and the RV industry also. The Presiding Officer has a significant RV industry in the great State of Indiana.

The National Marine Manufacturers Association—believe it or not, we have marine manufacturing in Colorado, even though we are a pretty dry, landlocked State.

Look at the Motorcycle Industry Council, the Specialty Vehicle Institutes of America, the Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association, and the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation. Jeff Crane said: “The Great American Outdoors Act represents the largest commitment to public lands in our lifetime.”

“The Great American Outdoors Act represents the largest commitment to conservation and public lands in our lifetime.”

The National Wildlife Federation: “Now when we need it most, the Great American Outdoors Act will put hundreds of thousands of Americans to work restoring public lands infrastructure, expanding healthy outdoor experiences, and restoring wildlife habitat, all of which will help local economies recover across the country.”

Suzanne O’Neal—I know Suzanne well—the executive director of the Colorado Wildlife Federation, said: “This commonsense legislation is long overdue to help our national parks and other public lands meet the burgeoning demand of increased numbers of hikers, anglers, campers, and wildlife watchers who have been flocking to Colorado’s outdoor spaces in recent years.”

I talked about that, the fact that Rocky Mountain National Park has gone from 2.8 million to nearly 5 million visitors. It is the third-most visited national park in the country.

What happens when one area of the State gets heavily visited? It is not like they just stay in one area. They actually start going to other areas of the State. For instance, if you are in Colorado, you go to the national park, and maybe it is busy one day. So you decide to go a little bit farther. You go over toward Walden or you go over to the North Sand Dunes area or maybe

you spend a little bit of time in the White River National Forest, one of the most heavily visited forests in our State. The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest and the Pike and San Isabel National Forests are also some of the most heavily visited forests in the country. They are seeing more and more visitors because all of the other public lands are under pressure. When they are under pressure, that means they are more used, and when they are more used, they are experiencing more wear and tear and they are being loved to death. So we need to provide a way to fund it. That is what the Great American Outdoors Act does.

There is the National Parks Conservation Association, the American Horse Council, and the Trust for Public Lands.

Teresa Martinez, the executive director of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, said: "In the Rocky Mountain West, public lands and trails are vital to our region's economy and our quality of life."

The Nature Conservancy's Sally Jewell, former Secretary of the Interior, signed a letter with six other Secretaries of the Interior to talk about the importance of this bill. Two of them are from Colorado. Secretary Ken Salazar and Secretary Gale Norton are talking about the need for this legislation.

The American Society of Landscape Architects—the list goes on and on of people who support this legislation. They support it because we value the outdoors. We value our environment, and we value our public lands.

Colorado has long been the gateway to public lands in this country, but now it is the headquarters to our Nation's public lands with the Bureau of Land Management headquartered in Grand Junction, CO.

So these two bills put together represent that chance in a lifetime, as we have heard from many of the supporters of this legislation. In Colorado it was called "the holy grail of conservation legislation" by the Durango Herald this morning.

It is an opportunity for every State to benefit. I have a list of every State in the country right here and the work they have done. I will just pull one out. In Alabama, if you look at Alabama, the national parks backlog is nearly \$30 million. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has provided Alabama with \$165 million in funding over the last five decades. Alabama National Forest, Blowing Rock Cave National Wildlife Refuge, Clear Creek Recreation Area—that is just Alabama.

Let's just pull another one out and see: Florida. Florida has received \$1.06 billion in funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund over the last five decades. There is the Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades Headwater National Wildlife Refuge, Apalachicola National Forest—I hope I got that one right—and the Canaveral National Seashore, plus 27 other areas.

They have a \$240 million backlog in deferred maintenance projects, with \$75 million in the Everglades National Park. The Dry Tortugas National Park is \$63 million in need. Gulf Islands National Seashore is \$60.6 million in needs.

All of these States have benefited from coast-to-coast, from sea to shining sea, from Hawaii to Maine and Florida to Alaska. Those are the States that have benefited from the legislation covered by the Great American Outdoors Act.

In Colorado alone, the popularity of our outdoor recreation and public lands continues to grow. Over the last 5 years, visitation numbers in national parks has continued to increase. National park visitation in 2019 overall surpassed 2018 visits by more than 9 million visits. That is 327 million recreation visits across the country, over 1.4 billion recreation visitor hours, 13.8 million over the United States. That is 2019.

And 2020, of course, is going to look a little different. Some of our national parks are not opened yet. Some of them are staging their openings. Rocky Mountain National Park is open, but its reservations are reduced, and the entries are reduced to accommodate the need to protect people during this pandemic. These numbers are going to be different.

So that means that places like Estes Park are going to have fewer people in their restaurants and fewer people in their hotels. Fewer people are stopping at the saltwater taffy shop on Main Street in Estes, and fewer people are doing things like bumper boats and putt-putt golf along the way.

The Great American Outdoors Act is one of those pieces of legislation that brings everybody in the Chamber together for a bipartisan opportunity to help these communities at a time that they need it the most. By helping the land, we are helping the communities, because it is there for future generations and because it belongs to future generations.

This really is an opportunity for this Nation to come together at a time of great need economically and spiritually, and, quite frankly, to succeed.

I am reminded also at this time about something I read on the floor earlier this week by one of the moving leaders of Rocky Mountain National Park. He talked about how in our national parks and trails and forests, we find the space we need to think, the space we need to hope, to provide courage, and that they can provide a little bit more kindness, that what they give to us is a little bit more kindness. I said often throughout the COVID-19 experience that we have to keep in mind, as we learned in Sunday school, that our struggles and tribulations give us perseverance, and that perseverance leads to courage, and courage leads to hope.

So as we think about what Enos Mills, the father of national parks, said

about the trails bringing back kindness that we all need, I think about other areas of our National Park System and some of our land areas and our national historic sites that maybe someday can benefit from the Great American Outdoors Act. I think about a specific site in southeastern Colorado known as Amache. I have legislation in that is a resource study on whether or not Amache, CO, should be considered as part of the national park system.

Let me tell you the history about Amache. There is a monument down the road from this building, just a couple blocks away from here. It was the site in 1943 of a Japanese-American internment camp. With Executive order 9066, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said that Japanese people would be ripped from their homes unconstitutionally and put into these camps.

In 1943, there was a high school established at Amache, and a woman by the name of Marion Konishi Takehara became a valedictorian of the high school that they had created. In the speech she wrote for her valedictorian speech, she talked about what the country meant to her today. Did the country mean the same things it meant to her before she was behind the searchlights, removed from her home? Did it mean justice and equality and fairness? Did she believe in America? She went on to talk about all of the challenges and struggles and things in our history that we know are the darkest moments of our Nation—the original sin of slavery, the continued discrimination faced by African Americans in our communities, the treatment of others in our society, waves of immigrants. She talked about how the United States has learned from every one of those moments, and we can overcome them all because America is where we learn from our mistakes in the past, and we take the actions to correct them, and we get back to the idea of justice and fairness and equality.

I don't know about you, but I think that is the kind of spirit and the kind of hope and the kind of belief and faith in this country that we need right now as we face some of the biggest challenges this generation has ever seen, confronting the issues of racism, confronting the issues of inequality.

Our national parks, our historic areas, and our public lands provide us with one more opportunity, one more chance to not forget the dark moments as we look for greater inspiration ahead, as we use this to learn from the past, to reach our highest peaks as a nation. That is the inspiration of the Great American Outdoors Act—the work we can do with the Land and Water Conservation Fund to bring our parks up to snuff for future generations.

I know my colleague from the great State of Iowa is on the Senate floor. I thank him for his support in the work we have been doing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on Wednesday, June 3, this year, the Associated Press released an article detailing China's stonewalling and delay tactics in withholding crucial data from the World Health Organization. That information that was held was about the novel coronavirus that caused COVID-19.

Now, this article gives us a glimpse behind the scenes of the World Health Organization, and there are a lot of questions raised about the World Health Organization today in regard to their relationship with China. The political leaders at WHO pursued a strategy of placating China in a seemingly haphazard attempt to coax China's leader into cooperating more fully.

Now, despite red flags raised by medical experts within the organization about the lack of data coming out of China and also serious doubts about the Chinese Government's claim that human-to-human transmission was not of any concern, WHO leadership, through all of that, continued lauding China's approach and transparency on this whole virus issue.

Many career officials openly voiced their frustration with how the World Health Organization leadership lacked the willingness to push China to hand over vital information about the virus. Remember, the World Health Organization did publicly push China when it withheld information on the SARS outbreak in 2003 but didn't seem to be as interested pushing China as much this time.

The Chinese Government then refused to share data about COVID-19 test results that would have allowed researchers around the world to make independent assessments of the virus's spread.

Now, weeks passed before the Chinese Government allowed the World Health Organization to see the map of the virus genome, and that genome was created by Chinese researchers. So they had the information where other people could start out to try to find a vaccine. By that time, the virus was already spreading around the globe, which has led to countless needless deaths and immeasurable economic damage globally that now rests on the shoulders of the Chinese for that happening.

I am glad that the World Health Organization member countries approved an investigation as to how the organization handled COVID-19. I hope this will be a truly independent investigation that will prevent future mishaps.

Now, in the meantime, we already know enough about the actions by the World Health Organization management to warrant immediate changes. Politics must never again get in the way of those medical professionals in the organization who are actually dedicated to fulfilling the World Health Organization's mission to share accurate

and timely public health information and at the same time save lives.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RACISM

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, last week I attended a memorial service for my constituent Mr. George Floyd, who was murdered by Minneapolis police. Like so many Minnesotans, my heart is broken for Mr. Floyd and his family and for a Black community that has been here too many times. I will once again add my voice to the chorus demanding that the police officers responsible for his death face justice.

But I keep finding myself thinking that Mr. Floyd's death wasn't just a tragedy and it wasn't just a crime. It was a failure. It was our failure. Systemic racism is built into every level of our society, and for 400 years, Black and Brown and Indigenous people have paid its price.

Racism isn't just evil, though it is. It is dangerous. And racism isn't just a moral issue, though it is. It is a public health issue. And the death of Mr. Floyd, like the deaths of so many Black and Brown people before him, is an indictment of our failure as policymakers to fulfill our first and most important duty, which is to protect the lives of the people whom we serve.

Black lives matter. We need to say it loud and often, with strength and with purpose, and if we truly mean it, then we need to be very clear about why it is that so many Black and Brown lives are being stolen, and that means we can't just point to systemic racism writ large. We have to talk about the police.

This is about the impunity with which police officers are allowed to kill Black and Brown Americans. This is about a society in which police departments have become fundamentally unaccountable institutions. This is about the fact that law enforcement in America does not deliver equal justice for all.

The institutional racism that plagues American law enforcement is real. This is not just a few bad cops. It is the entire culture of policing—a culture that far too often encourages violence, condones abuse, and resists reforms and accountability at every turn.

This culture kills, and it will continue to do so unless we stop it. If we can't see that, if we can't say it, if we aren't ready to use our power and our privilege to address this unforgiveable failure, well, then we might as well say nothing at all.

So why is it so hard for us to talk about these issues? Why is it so hard to even admit that there is something

dangerously wrong about the role that police play in our society?

Well, I think, in part, it is because of the respect that we have for police officers themselves. We ask these men and women to put their lives on the line every single day. Their job is to run to trouble, and hundreds of thousands of police officers in my community and in all of yours fulfill their duty with skill and with courage every day.

But I think there is something else lurking behind our inaction. The vast majority of policymakers, especially here in Washington, are White, and the vast majority of the interactions that White people have with police officers are positive.

When we are scared or threatened or hurt, well, police officers come to help. And when we hear the siren or we see a blue uniform, we breathe a sigh of relief, and it is uncomfortable for White people to acknowledge that this feeling of relief is really about privilege. It is uncomfortable to imagine giving up some piece of that privilege.

After all, we all want clean, safe streets. We all want quiet, orderly neighborhoods. We want to be able to call 911 when we are in danger and know that the police officers will rush to our aid.

We may even catch ourselves worrying that a police force held accountable for its abuse of power against Black and Brown bodies will be a police force a little less empowered to protect us.

Often, when White people talk about racism, we define it as a hatred that lurks within people's hearts, and then we search within ourselves and we can feel satisfied that we are free from prejudice. But racism, colleagues, is manifested as behavior—behavior that hurts, that kills. Who even knows what is in "how to change hearts and minds"? But we do know, I think, let's say: Let's start with changing behavior.

So this is something that I think about a lot as a Minnesotan. In my home State we pride ourselves on our legacy of progressive activism. We believe deeply in civic participation, and we are proud to have the highest voter turnout in the whole country. We are home to a diverse array of communities—African American, Somali, Hmong, Latinx, Native, and more—all people who belong here just as much as anyone else.

And we are home to some of the Nation's worst racial disparities. It is not just that Black men are more likely to be stopped, more likely to be searched, more likely to be assaulted and killed by police officers. A Black or Brown or Native child growing up in the neighborhood where George Floyd was murdered can expect worse education outcomes, worse health, fewer opportunities than a White child that lives just a few miles down the road.

The truth is that for all of the progress that we have made in America over the course of my lifetime and for

all of the hearts and minds that have changed, racism was built into our systems from the very beginning. While it is still present in everything from healthcare to education, to housing and environmental policy, it jumps off the page when you look at our Nation's criminal justice system.

Consider this. African Americans make up less than 14 percent of the population, but they account for 23 percent of fatal police shootings and nearly one-third of our prison population.

Studies repeatedly show that Black people and White people use drugs at roughly the same rate, but Black people are more than twice as likely to be arrested for drug offenses and nearly four times as likely when it comes to marijuana.

No matter where you look, our criminal justice system unfairly targets Black and Brown and Native people, threatening their freedom and often their lives, and you can't just blame that on racist cops. That is us doing that. Even if we harbor no hatred in our hearts, we are responsible for the racist impact of a system that was built historically by White Americans to serve White Americans.

We are the beneficiaries of a system that killed George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Atlatiana Jefferson, Sandra Bland, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Rekia Boyd, Jessica Hernandez, Eric Salgado, Philando Castile, Jamar Clark, and so many others.

So that is a hard thing to admit, but right now hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens are demanding that we face this ugly truth.

The people marching in our streets have watched us forgive ourselves time and again for failing Black and Brown Americans, like George Floyd, and they are angry, they are grieving, and they are exhausted, and this time they will not be denied.

It may make us uncomfortable to hear this anger, to see the images on television, to experience this turmoil when our country is going through so much already, but that is the whole point of protest. This crisis has long deserved our attention, and because we withheld that attention, these protesters are demanding it now.

We cannot claim to support the goal of justice if we object to being confronted with the reality of injustice. We cannot walk away from this moral crisis. We have done that too many times after too many deaths, and every time we do, we fail the next Black or Brown American who dies in police custody.

I just can't live with that. We have to make a change, and this time, White people have to get past our discomfort. Black and Brown people have been trying for too long to tell us that systemic racism isn't just limiting their opportunities. It is killing their children.

To the communities of color in Minnesota, whom I am proud to represent, I want you to know that I hear you and that I will do everything I can to make

sure that everyone here in Washington hears you too.

Most of all, we have to devote our time, our energy, our resources, our platforms, our power, and our privilege to helping this movement succeed.

As Pastor Billy Russell from the Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Minneapolis said to me, "we need to make it right. It's not right now, but we need to make it right."

I want to tell my Minnesota community, my colleagues, and the American people exactly how I want to use my power and my privilege to help make it right.

In the coming weeks, my office will be moving forward with legislative action focused on three priorities: first, fundamentally transforming the role of the police in our society from the way we fund and train and equip officers to the relationships between departments and the communities that they serve. We must rethink the responsibilities we assign to the police and the authority we give them to fulfill those responsibilities. We need to imagine and reinvent American policing from the ground up.

Second, we must fix the systems in police departments that obstruct accountability and transparency at every turn. Our system effectively puts cops above the law by insulating them from civil and criminal liability for their actions. This leads people of color to conclude that they can't trust the police, and it leads the police to conclude that they will never face consequences for crossing the line. They are both right, and this means something is wrong. If we want to change the way officers act, we need to change the rules that shield them from accountability. Accountability and preventing this misconduct from being ignored will not only hold police departments responsible for perpetuating violence and unequal justice, but it will help prevent violence and injustice the next time.

The Justice in Policing Act, led by my colleagues Senator HARRIS and Senator BOOKER, is an important step forward. I am proud to support it, and I urge all of my colleagues to join in. Racism is about behavior. We can't legislate what police officers believe, but we can and we must legislate how they behave.

Third, restoring the communities that have been torn apart by injustice—in the Twin Cities, neighbors are already coming together to clean up the damage sustained by the unrest and upheaval of the last 2 weeks, but the task of making our communities whole goes far beyond repairing the physical damage. We need a new and sustained push for racial and economic justice, not just law enforcement but in healthcare and education and in housing and in environmental policy.

The people I spoke to when I was home last weekend are grieving, they are angry, and they are hurt, but most of all, they are exhausted. Communities of color have spent years fight-

ing to be heard, fighting for justice, fighting for resources, fighting for survival. As their Senator, it is my job to carry that fight here to Washington in the Senate.

Four hundred years of structural racism cannot be overcome with a single piece of legislation or even by a single generation of legislators, but we can't let the enormity of the task blind us to the urgency of this work.

The last 2 weeks have been extraordinarily difficult for Minnesotans and for our country. But, throughout history, the hardest times have always been the times of the greatest progress. I choose to find purpose in making sure that, in this moment, we lead to real progress towards justice and equality.

That is why I came to the floor today. No statement of intent, no matter how thoughtful, will change the reality of this crisis, but I want this statement to be on the record, part of my record as a U.S. Senator. I want to be accountable for these commitments. I want Minnesotans to hold me accountable. I want to be a part of holding this body and all of us in the Senate accountable.

This, then, will be the first in a series of floor speeches I intend to deliver examining the systemic injustice that plagues American policing and plagues Native, Black, and Brown communities more broadly. It will be about the steps we need to take to address this injustice: redefining the role of the police, reinforcing accountability for police officers, and restoring the communities I am so blessed to serve.

This is a big fight. The scale of the injustice is overwhelming. It can be hard to know where to start, but the people who took to the streets last week—in the Twin Cities, in communities large and small across Minnesota, and in cities across this country—are a movement for change, and they are showing us the path forward. This path requires us to be courageous, requires us to be humble, and requires us to be uncomfortable, but it is a path rooted in love and in trust and in hope.

We saw it in the way the protesters brought joy to the most serious of fights they faced. We saw it in the way they stood up to those who would do damage to their communities and to their cause. We saw it in the way they kept their focus, even in the face of unimaginable brutality.

So many Minnesotans have shown such courage and grace. I am proud to be your Senator, and I am proud to be your neighbor. I am committing myself to the path that you are forging. I hope my constituents, my colleagues in the Senate, and all of my fellow Americans will do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BRAUN). The Senator from Maine.

H.R. 1957

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues in supporting the Great American Outdoors Act, a bill to provide full funding for

the Land and Water Conservation Fund and to address the deferred maintenance backlog for our national parks.

Under the expert leadership of Senators GARDNER, MANCHIN, and DAINES, 59 bipartisan Senators have cosponsored this bill that will allow landowners, States, local communities, and conservation partners to plan for the future and to restore our national parks.

More than 50 years ago, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act established America's most successful conservation and outdoor recreation program. There is truly nothing else like it. The fund was designed to ensure that outdoor recreational lands would be secured for future generations.

I remember, in one of my first years in the Senate, working with my colleague from Colorado, Senator and later Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, as we sought to boost the funding for the stateside part of the program.

If you look at a map of the United States and put a pin in every place where there was a Land and Water Conservation Fund stateside supported program, you would find that every single county in the country had at least one project. Oftentimes, people do not realize that local ballpark or the trails that run along a local stream or lake are the result of funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and those are projects that are designed by local people, selected by local people, and then the Federal Government helps in the funding to acquire and maintain the land.

Just last year, this important program was permanently authorized, and now we have the opportunity to ensure for the American people that this program will have consistent funding to play the strongest possible role in preserving open spaces, special lands, and revitalizing communities for years to come.

Investments in this landmark conservation program support access to the outdoors for all Americans, as LWCF, as I have mentioned, has invested in literally every county in our country. Its funding has been used to open up key areas for hunting, fishing, and other recreational access; to support working forests and ranches and protect them from development; to acquire inholdings and protect critical lands in national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, Civil War battlefields, and other Federal areas; and, as I mentioned, my favorite part of the program, which is the stateside part of the program, which supports State and local projects, from ballparks to recreational trails.

Over the past five decades, Maine has received more than \$191 million in funding from LWCF. Examples of this funding include the Cold Stream Forest, a Forest Legacy Program project in Somerset County to preserve a beautiful area that continues the long and proud Maine tradition of conservation,

public access to recreation, and working forests.

In addition, we have the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in southern Maine, where a once-undeveloped 110-acre tract along the coast in Biddeford was preserved for natural habitat and expanded recreational access.

Of the more than 850 Land and Water Conservation Fund sites in Maine, 650 are community-based projects, from Riverside Park in Fort Kent in northern Maine to Haley soccer fields in Kittery, right near the New Hampshire border.

I want to repeat that statistic again. Out of the 850 Land and Water Conservation Fund sites in the State of Maine, 650 are community-based projects, like the park in Fort Kent that I mentioned and the soccer fields in Kittery.

In its more than 50-year history, however, this program has been funded fully only twice at the authorized level of \$900 million. I believe that Congress should fully fund this program to deliver on the promise that was made to the American people back in 1964 to take a portion of the proceeds from natural resource development, such as offshore oil drilling, and invest a portion in conservation and outdoor recreation.

I do want to recognize two of my colleagues who have other ideas—Senator CASSIDY and Senator WHITEHOUSE—for bringing up the issue of funding for coastal States. Representing a coastal State, I agree that we need to do more for our coastal States, and I support their efforts to ensure additional funding that can be directed to coastal States and coastal communities. I believe, however, that that issue, regrettably, is going to have to be dealt with at a later time, but I do support their effort.

Furthermore, another important piece of this bill addresses our deferred maintenance backlog on our Nation's public lands. Now, what I am most interested in here is our national parks. Our national parks have a huge maintenance backlog, and that includes at Acadia National Park, a true gem of a park on the coast of Maine where we have seen record numbers of visitors in recent years. This bill will help Acadia National Park tackle the more than \$60 million of maintenance backlog work—on trails, roads, bridges, buildings—to ensure that every visitor can experience the absolute beauty of this true gem of a national park on the Maine coastline.

I would urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, it is telling that the bill we are considering this week called the Great American Outdoors Act was written behind closed doors and has now been hermetically

sealed, walled off from amendments, by the people's elected representatives.

Forget the theatrics in Seattle; this bill is the real Capitol Hill autonomous zone. In its current form, this bill enables the Federal Government, if it is enacted, to purchase new lands in perpetuity, without accountability and without oversight or any measures to make sure that it can actually care for the land that it owns, perpetuating and worsening our already highly problematic Federal public lands policy.

This policy will have one overarching impact: to make life easier for politicians and bureaucrats and harder for the American people whom they, ostensibly, serve.

This is not the way the Senate is supposed to run. The point of this body, its whole reason for existence, is to take imperfect bills, bring them to the floor of the Senate, and then come together so that we can hone and fine-tune them, so that we can debate them and discuss them, so that we can identify their weak points and make them stronger—or at least less weak.

The Senate is supposed to have an open debate and amendment process precisely so that we can raise concerns and we can find solutions and arrive at genuine, rather than forced, compromise and consensus. This week, I have been encouraged to discover just how many of my colleagues want to do just that. Many of my colleagues from different States and from both parties are filing amendments in response to this bill. Some of those amendments would significantly change it; others would present simply small tweaks to tighten up the language or to provide for better congressional oversight so that the American people are guaranteed that what it says in the law is going to reflect what happens on the ground. These amendments have already been written. They are waiting for consideration.

Anyone watching C-SPAN 2 today will notice there is nothing else happening on the Senate floor—I mean, literally nothing else happening on the Senate floor. In fact, I would note for the record that there are exactly three Members of the Senate in the Chamber right now—two on the floor and one at the Presiding Officer's desk. There is literally nothing else happening on the Senate floor. There is literally no other business with pressing deadlines pending before this body right now. The House of Representatives is adjourned and is apparently set to remain adjourned until June 30, so it is not as though we have any realistic deadline with the other side of the Capitol.

The Senate, right now, would simply rather do nothing than vote on amendments that those of us from the West, Senators from the gulf coast and from various States around the country, would like to propose and have, in fact, proposed.

I myself have proposed several. One of my amendments would require State legislative approval for any land acquisition proposed in that State so that

land acquisition would be something Washington does with the States rather than to the States.

Many people don't realize there is a big disparity among and between the States with regard to how much Federal land is owned. In every State east of Colorado, the Federal Government owns less than 15 percent. In every State Colorado and west, the Federal Government owns more than 15 percent. The average is more like 50 percent in the Western United States, and in many of those States, including my own, it is more like two-thirds of the land.

In these States and particularly the rural communities and those rural communities in particular where there is the highest concentration of Federal land, there is also poverty—poverty that is not just correlated with or coincidental to the Federal land ownership, but it is causally connected to its widespread existence.

Another of my amendments would require the Federal Government to dispose of current Federal lands before acquiring new ones, forcing land agencies to exercise fiscal responsibility and prioritize which lands they want to keep under their control.

So getting back to referring a few minutes ago to those areas, particularly those rural areas in my State, places like San Juan County, UT—San Juan County, UT, happens to be the poorest county in the State. It is also a place where the Federal Government owns 95-plus percent of the land. This is not a coincidence.

So there ought to be something in place that requires an offset so that when the Federal Government buys new land under the Land and Water Conservation Fund or otherwise, it has to offset it by disposing of land elsewhere.

There also ought to be some mechanism in place so as to give the State's sovereign lawmaking body, the State legislature, the ability to accept or reject the proposed expansion of the Federal land footprint in that State.

It is really easy for my colleagues from certain parts of the country—particularly those living east of the Rocky Mountains—to suggest that, you know, Federal land ownership is a great thing. First of all, a lot of people who say that do live east of the Rocky Mountains, and a lot of people who say that also incorrectly imagine that Federal public lands are more or less just national parks or declared wilderness areas. They are not.

In my State, most of the Federal land is not a national park, is not a national recreation area, is not a declared wilderness area; it is just garden-variety BLM or Forest Service land that is chronically environmentally mismanaged, and that leads to chronic environmental and economic problems.

I also have a number of other amendments that would reform the NEPA process—the process under the National Environmental Policy Act—to

help address the maintenance backlog on neglected land that Washington, DC, already owns and controls from its perch generally thousands of miles from the land in question.

Finally, I have an amendment to support Utah's interests under the Antiquities Act. Right now, other States have received protection and are protected from unilateral land grabs by the Federal Government for designation of national monuments. This is important, you see, because when they designate Federal land as a national monument, that changes the way that land can be accessed, the way it can be used. It goes from one Federal land classification to another. It is one of the strictest classifications in the sense that it is very, very difficult to use that land or for local affected populations to have influence over that land once it becomes a monument.

This is significant for Utah because 28 percent of the national monument acreage designated within the 50 States over the last 25 years has been in Utah. My State is due for the same types of protections that are already in place in Wyoming and in Alaska. Those States in years past have received far too many monument designations against their will. Eventually, they received statutory protection.

Utah has borne far more than its share of the burden in the designation of national monuments—monuments designated that way, by the way, by Presidents who were acting in open willful defiance of the will of the locally affected populations.

I believe that this is one of the most important changes we need to see in Federal lands policy. I will continue to fight for it until we achieve justice for Utah. In fact, this change could be achieved through a single 1-page bill, one mostly consisting of two words. Inserting the words “Or Utah” enables Utah to receive the same protection from hostile designation of national monuments by a President not interested in the will of the local population.

As important as all of these amendments are to me and my State, I am not even asking for the right to propose all of them this week. I am willing to set aside some of my priorities in order to help my colleagues pursue theirs and, most of all, to help the Senate as an institution to get back to the essential work that the Senate and the Senate alone can do. The Senate was created to be the place—the one place in our constitutional framework—where our diverse, divided Nation could come together, where we could air our disagreements and find common ground.

Every time we have a national controversy, a lot of people throw around the word “conversation.” We need to have a conversation about race, about police brutality, about freedom of speech, about the environment, about the national debt. The list goes on and on. These are all things about which we

need to have conversations. This isn't just a media trope. Senators say it too. I agree. We need to have conversations about each of these and so many other important national issues.

Guess what. This, right here, is literally the room where America is supposed to have these conversations. This place right here, within these four walls, is where these conversations are supposed to happen. It is not supposed to be done only on Twitter. It is not supposed to be done only on cable news shows. It is supposed to happen right here on this floor.

Yet here we are on a Thursday afternoon at 4:23, 4:24 p.m. Look around. Three Members are in the Chamber—two on the floor, one in the Chair. That is it.

This is where the conversation is supposed to happen. It is not occurring—not this conversation, nor any other, not on the Senate floor, not in the middle of the week. With a whole lot of things going on in the world, we are not having it.

We are not even having it on this piece of legislation, which, significant as it is, is dwarfed in comparison to the magnitude of many other issues that we have to deal with. That doesn't mean we don't need to deal with this legislation. We do. But as long as we are going to deal with it, as long as we are being asked to pass it, we need to at least have a conversation about it, and we are not doing that.

The only reason that the U.S. Senate was given the powers that we have in this body by the Founders and by our constituents is to facilitate those vital conversations. This isn't the New York Times op-ed page. We are not supposed to be afraid of debate here. The Senate is here to provide the venue where all Americans and all views can be heard, to hash out our differences and arrive at a consensus and compromise in the public eye.

It is especially important to do this in the Senate because this is the place where each State has equal representation. Big, heavily populated States have two Senators. So do small, sparsely populated States have two Senators. This, by the way, is the one type of change that cannot be made to the Constitution. It is the one type of constitutional amendment that is, itself, preemptively unconstitutional. You can't pursue article VI of the Constitution or amend the Constitution in such a way—even if you follow the article V amendment procedures, you cannot amend it in a way that changes the principle of equal representation in the Senate among and between the States.

It is especially important to have these debates and discussions when it comes to legislation like this one, like the Great American Outdoors Act, that, while important to the entire Nation in many respects, affects some States differently than it does others. This bill has a very different impact in Utah than it does in Colorado or in Montana or in Tennessee or in Maine. It is very, very different.

This is why we have the Senate—so that we can air out these grievances, so that we can air out our differences, so that we can make improvements to legislation.

Perhaps we can't improve it. There are a lot of things about this bill I don't like. There are other things about it I can live with. Yet if we can't have the conversation, we don't have the ability to amend or improve the legislation. As a result, the conversation doesn't happen. And most of the American people are excluded from this debate and this discussion and this conversation entirely.

This is where these conversations are supposed to occur, where we can arrive at consensus and compromise in the public eye. And this, I should note, is not for our convenience and comfort. Rather, the Senate's purpose as a deliberative body is to add another layer of republican and democratic legitimacy to the very laws we pass. The House exists to assert immediate public opinion on the basis of the proportional representation they have on that side of the Capitol.

The Senate exists to identify broad-based compromise and consensus that is essential to the political legitimacy in a nation as diverse as ours, and to do so in a way in which each State is equally represented. That is why we require supermajorities to end debate here. That is why we have 6-year terms. It is not to serve us. It is, rather, so we can serve everyone else.

But right now, we are abusing our constitutional privilege. We are willfully taking the powers of the American people—the powers that they gave us, that they have given us—to deny them their right to a diverse, deliberative, transparent, accountable process. We are doing this for no other purpose than for our own convenience. No wonder they can't stand us.

But it is not too late. It is not even too late for this week. There is still plenty of time to salvage this process, to flex our badly atrophied legislative muscles and to get to work.

After speaking with my colleagues all week, and, frankly, all of last week on these topics, I believe the consensus concerns about this bill are as follows: one, the inequity of natural resource revenue-sharing between the Federal Government and the States; two, the cost of the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund; three, the cost of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, or LWCF; four, the implications of an ever-expanding Federal land ownership; and, five, transparency for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

We could pick just one amendment for each of the aforementioned categories—just one for each of those categories. We could have just five amendments all together. By so doing, we could make significant progress on this legislation. More than that, we could strengthen our legislative muscle memory and take a step toward restor-

ing the vital deliberative powers of this body.

The Senate has long called itself the world's greatest deliberative body. These days, when it doesn't debate, when it shuts out amendments from individual Members—keeping in mind that this is supposed to be one of the two fundamental rules of the Senate, where each Member has access to unlimited debate and unlimited amendments—when it does this, it is neither great nor deliberative. It is not living up to its name, to its history, to its traditions, to its capacity, nor to its constitutional purpose.

Five amendments are not a lot, especially considering this legislative text bypassed the committee process all together in the first place. This bill, as a bill, was never even processed by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, on which I serve. It bypassed that committee all together. It didn't go through it. Even if the Senate votes on these amendments and votes them down—notwithstanding the fact that we bypassed the committee—it is here now. There is nothing in the Constitution that says it has to go through committee. It is better if we do. We didn't here. We can still deal with some of the concerns that individual Members have. This is the appropriate place to do that, after all, with or without committee action.

Regardless of the outcome of those votes, even if the Senate votes those amendments down—every one of them—at least we will then be on record about our priorities and about our positions. At least then we have a chance to weigh in and say: Here is what I liked about the bill, and here is what I didn't like about the bill.

That, in turn, helps us to communicate to the public about why we either do or don't support whatever legislation is intact at the end of that process. That, in turn, would strengthen the bonds of accountability between the government and the governed, and, I would hope, restore some of the public trust that Washington, DC, has squandered for the last several decades.

If we require Senators to speak on their amendments and then move to a vote, we could dispose of all five of these amendments in just a few hours. We could do this today. We could have done it earlier today. We could have done it at any moment yesterday. It is just not too much to ask. We have to give this, like all legislation, the due consideration and the careful deliberation that it deserves and that the American people deserve.

Now, more than ever, our country needs us to be able to come together, work together, and find solutions to the problems that we face. I believe this bill presents us with an opportunity to do precisely that. I am hopeful that my colleagues and I will get the chance to take it. This is what we need to do.

We know that the Senate in the past has functioned in such a way as to

allow every Member of this body to represent his or her State. We also know that can't really happen in a way that our system has always contemplated unless every Senator has a chance to weigh in on and to propose improvements to each bill and not be shut out of a process. What we get when we jettison that is, instead, a process by which a small handful of individuals will write legislation, that legislation gets airdropped on to the Senate floor in a hermetically sealed Chamber, and then Members are told: You have to vote for this entire package or against this entire package. You have a simple binary choice: Take it all or leave it all.

That isn't fair. The American people deserve better. We have settled. It is time for us to no longer settle, but to expect more, to expect the Senate to do its work.

Consistent with that, I think it is important for us to propose alternatives. I have nothing but a desire to see these things debated and discussed. In order to do that, I am proposing a solution.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendments and call up the following amendments en bloc: Kennedy amendment No. 1599, which would allow Gulf States to receive a greater portion of revenues produced from energy sources off their coast; Cruz amendment No. 1651, which would reflect honest budgeting practices, direct the Secretary of the Interior to sell off excess Federal lands to the public as the "pay for" for this legislation, subject all Trust Fund spending to congressional oversight through the appropriations process, and strike the provision that allows the Trust Fund to receive credit for interest that will not really be earned based on money that does not really exist; Braun amendment No. 1635, which would prevent unrelated spending increases in the future by reducing the discretionary budget limit by \$450 million; Lee amendment No. 1647, which would prohibit the Federal Government from making acquisitions using LWCF funds until they have received from the State, where the proposed acquisition would be located, notice that the State has enacted legislation approving the acquisition; and finally, Lee amendment No. 1639, which would require reports to Congress on costs of acquisition, maintenance, and administration of lands obtained under the LWCF, reports to States and local units of government regarding lost property taxes due to LWCF land acquisitions, and reports to Congress on Restoration Fund projects to be funded, currently being funded, and the amount of money expended for that project, as well as an estimate of expenditures needed to complete each project.

I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the amendments in the order listed with no intervening action or debate, and that the amendments be subject to a 60-affirmative

vote threshold for adoption; finally, that following disposition of the amendments listed, the remaining pending amendments be withdrawn, with the exception of the substitute amendment No. 1617, and the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the substitute amendment No. 1617.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection.

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I would like to note now for the record that there are exactly two Senators remaining in the Senate Chamber. It is now 4:38 p.m. Now we are three again—now four. We have four Senators in the Chamber at 4:39 p.m. on a Thursday. This is not the end of the week, unless perhaps you are in the U.S. Senate.

There is no reason why the Senate shouldn't be convening and debating amendments right now in order to do this. There is no valid reason why Members who understand and appreciate the legitimate concerns that are the focus of this or any other piece of legislation ought not be able to raise concerns with that legislation and offer up amendments to improve the legislation in question, especially as is the case here.

There are particular States, including my own, that would be disproportionately disadvantaged and harmed by this legislation. It is interesting to note that the Federal Government owns more of my State than in almost any other State, than it does in any of the States of any of the sponsors or prominent cosponsors of this legislation. Some of the cosponsors, in fact, are people who live in States where the Federal Government owns very little land. Look, I don't complain—no fault. In some cases our disagreements here represent differences in our background or differences in the preferences of our constituencies, but as much as anything, I think they stem from and reflect differences in the States that we represent, not just the preferences of the voters, but also the way the public land is owned—the extent to which Federal public land is owned and the impact that it has on our local economies. This is a big deal.

So like I say, I don't fault them. I regard each of the people behind this legislation as beloved friends and colleagues and as people who I deeply respect and trust and admire. They are people with whom I have agreed and cooperated with on countless instances on many wide-ranging topics.

They are not wrong to want to pass legislation that they believe is correct. They are, however, grossly mistaken in believing that it is appropriate in this circumstance to shut out Members of this body who have a different point of view, to exclude them from the debate process.

One could argue and some might argue in connection with this: Fine, let's debate it. We are debating it right now. What is debate after all other than giving speeches in a legislative body?

That is what we are doing, and that statement is true as far as it goes. Nevertheless, in order for that debate to have full meaning, we need to follow our own rules, and we need to allow Members, pursuant to our rules—and not just our rules, but also our precedents—our time-honored traditions and the spirit of comity that once inhabited and pervaded every corner of this room. It is that spirit of comity, those traditions, and those rules that really contemplate a much more collegial environment, one in which we don't come to the floor with legislation and say: That is it. There is no more. That is it. This legislation was written as if on stone tablets. There is no more to be written. This book is sealed. You can't have anything more to say.

That is not how colleagues treat each other. That is how one would treat a subordinate, and frankly, I think it is insulting—not to me but to those I represent and to those represented by my colleagues doing it.

What I find also offensive is the notion that it is so important somehow and so urgent to pass this legislation that we do so now, and that we not wait until next week to consider it. But it is apparently not important enough to allow individual Members to introduce amendments—even amendments crafted in good faith, amendments that wouldn't do any structural damage to the bill, amendments that may or may not pass, but that haven't been written by the principal authors and principal proponents of this legislation. This institution is better than that, and I thought we were. I think we owe each other more than that.

Look, this isn't always going to be the case in every single piece of legislation. There are a number of things that are passed by this body by unanimous consent. Others that come to the floor will receive an overwhelming vote one way or another and don't necessarily, in every circumstance, trigger the need for amendments. Those are, in some cases, matters that are relatively non-controversial. I see no reason for an open amendment process if we were, for example, to declare June 2020 to be National Sofa Care Awareness Month. I don't think anybody is going to care that much about that legislation, certainly not enough to care deeply about filing amendments. In other cases, some legislation might have been adequately vetted through a process of committee action and public debate to the point where maybe no one really sees the need for additional amendment by the time it gets to the floor. But that is not always going to be the case. It should come as no surprise with a piece of legislation like this one, sweeping in its effect, adding to our already unaffordable mandatory

spending, putting Federal land acquisition on an equal footing with programs like Social Security and Medicare by making it mandatory. Any time you trigger any of these alarm bells, it ought to send a signal that this is not an appropriate moment to expect that no Member from any State will have any different perspective. It is not right. Deep down they know it is not right.

I have seen each of my most vocal proponents of this legislation on the receiving end of this very kind of strategy. I have stood with them as they have stood against it, even when I don't agree with their substantive policy agenda, even if I don't agree perhaps with their strategic plan in question, but I stand with them anyway because they are my colleagues. They are my friends. It is what colleagues do for each other. You see, the difference between a colleague and a subordinate is that you don't purport to tell a colleague what he or she can do if you don't have the authority to do that. You don't act offended if your colleague doesn't agree with you, and you don't try to silence your colleague. That is how you treat a subordinate.

It has happened for far too long here. I have been here for 9½ years, and I have seen it under Democratic leadership and I have seen it under Republican leadership. It is not how it used to work here. It is not how it should ever work. I find it revolting. It is one thing to say: I want to vote on this legislation. It is quite another thing to have the gall to say: I want to vote on this legislation, but I don't want anyone else to have any say on what this legislation says, and I don't care what this does to another State. I don't care that there are other parts of other States in the Union, represented by my friends and my colleagues, where people will suffer in this legislation. I don't care—not my problem. I so don't care that that is a problem for somebody else, that I am going to make sure that the other person can't care and that he can't even make changes to this legislation.

If I were their subordinate, perhaps I would understand. As their colleague, I don't. This isn't how you treat a colleague. This isn't how colleagues interact in a body that considers itself deliberative and collegial. So say what they want about this being bipartisan, about there having been a collegial process about this bill's creation—let them say what they want about that. Make no mistake. This is wrong, what they are doing. I am not even talking right now about the merits of the bill. I disagree with the bill. I don't like the substantive policy end that it seeks to achieve, but I am not talking about that right now. What I am saying is wrong and even outrageous is the gall, the temerity that they have to tell colleagues that they don't have an equal seat at this table, that their election certificate somehow matters less.

Sooner or later, I believe that our best days lie ahead of us. I am an optimist at heart. Optimism is something that is hard to have at a moment like this, when you have been completely shut out of a legislative debate. But the reason I am optimistic here has to do with a very simple reality. Sooner or later, in a system like this one, Members will find a way with the system of rules of the Senate and as authorized by the rules and procedures and traditions of the Senate. They will find a way to get around it, and I think you will see a growing dynamic in which Members will reach across the aisle in order to solve this very problem.

This problem is not a Republican problem distinctively. It is not a Democratic problem distinctively. We have seen it under the leadership of both parties, regardless of who has the majority. This is a problem that Senators have among and between themselves, and I think in time you will see more and more Members coming to each other's defense, regardless of political ideology and regardless of the substantive ends that we achieve in a piece of legislation. I think the sun is setting or at least preparing to set on the days of locking out individual Members from the amendment process. It isn't right, and deep down we know it is not.

I will note that other than the Presiding Officer, at 4:53 p.m. on a Thursday, I remain the only Member of the U.S. Senate within this Chamber—just the Presiding Officer and me. That is it.

We could be voting now. We could have started voting hours ago. We could have started voting yesterday. We could have voted on all of these amendments. For all I know, all of the amendments that I am proposing could have been considered and voted down and they would have had their way. So what difference would it make? I am not certain whether they would all fail. It is not up to me for all to fail. Thirdly, even if they did all fail—every last one of them—at least then Members of this body would be able to face their constituents at the end of that process and be able to say: Look, I liked this legislation. Even though it had these problems, the reasons to support it outweighed those for opposing it.

Or they would be able to say: Look, I tried to make it better. I failed. These problems remained. So I voted against it.

That increases accountability, rather than decreasing. That is good. That is good for a constitutional republic like ours. It is essential for the U.S. Senate. It is how it is supposed to work.

So we could have done that yesterday. We could have done that this morning. We could still do it right now. We could start that process right now in a matter of hours. We would have debated, discussed, and voted on these amendments. Then we could move on. We could put this whole thing behind us. We could do it right now.

They are hearing nothing of it, which begs the question: Why? Who benefits from this? The only people who benefit are the small handful of individuals who, on any particular occasion, happen to be involved in this decision making and become more powerful. But they do so in a dishonorable way, at the expense of all of their colleagues, at the expense of their relationship with their colleagues, but most damning of all, at the expense of their relationship and obligations to the voters who elected them—and I mean those in every State.

I am sure they think they are doing the right thing, that the end justifies the means. Nobody is immune to that line of thinking. It is something we have to be conscious of. The circumstance doesn't make it OK. This is wrong. We can do better. We can, we must, and together, we will.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, we have a lot of problems in America today—a pandemic, a recession, a surge of violence in our major cities drowning out a nationwide call for justice and hope. We have work to do in this body and this city to solve these problems and to heed that call.

Our voters sent us here to make things better, to rebuild, to heal, but that is not what we are doing. No, for the last several weeks, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and their allies in the media and some professional political activists on a payroll have been trying to divide us against each other, to paralyze us, to stoke resentment of our fellow citizens and hatred of this Nation that we call home.

It is really remarkable, if you think about it. Just a few short weeks ago, we were united in outrage at the murder of George Floyd. We were united in impatience for justice for his family. And nothing has changed about that. All people of good will still want justice to be done. I do. But the call of the marchers has been weaponized by partisans who want nothing more than to say that only some Americans really support equal justice under the law; only some institutions of government are really committed to that cause; only one party can be trusted to govern in good faith; only one political coalition is righteous enough to rule over the other.

You don't hear talk of unity when watching MSNBC or reading the New York Times these days. Instead, those outlets are drawing up a new list of villains—not Floyd's killer. No, not him. We are way past George Floyd now, I guess. No, we are talking about new grievances, structural evils endemic to America itself—the police, the military, the flag, oh, and of course the President. It is always about the President.

Actually, what it is really about is the President's voters. It is about the

people who elected him. It is about the red States, like mine. It is about the people who live there. The elite media, the woke mob—they don't like these people, and they want the rest of America to dislike them too. This is why they are telling us that it wasn't a homicidal cop who killed George Floyd. No, his death now is the product of systemic racism, we are told, and anyone who doesn't acknowledge their role in his death, anyone who doesn't bend their knee to this extreme ideology, is complicit in violence.

It is not enough, apparently, to bring Derrick Chauvin to justice for his crimes. No, now we have to defund all the police. There is no scab they will not pick at, no divide they will not exploit, no controversy they will not gin up to make us hate each other. Well, we cannot take their bait.

In the last weeks, we have seen a professor put on leave for quoting the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. Not woke enough. We have seen the New York Times fire its opinion page editor for daring to publish the words of a Republican Senator. He forgot the party line. We have seen a literal insurrection in the streets of Seattle, a break-away Antifa enclave ruled by a self-described warlord—you cannot make this stuff up—lauded now, in some quarters at least, as an experiment in post-police governance.

We have had a bill introduced in the House to bring that experiment in chaos to our cities and towns all across the country and to demonize the fine men and women who put their lives on the line day and night to protect protesters' rights to demand justice.

The madness is accelerating this month, but the radical left has been at this for a while.

The New York Times won a Pulitzer Prize for the 1619 Project—a propaganda campaign designed to recast America's founding as an evil event and American democracy as a system of violent racial oppression. It won that prize despite wide criticism by historians who objected to its historical revisionism.

Now, with the Pulitzer's seal of approval, the Times is developing a 1619 grade school curriculum so that our children will be indoctrinated to hate this country at taxpayer expense. They want to do to our public schools what they have already done to the universities.

What does any of this have to do with healing our Nation? What does it have to do with bringing about that more perfect union, whose achievement is our shared ambition and shared obligation as Americans? The answer is, nothing. And that is the point.

As has been widely reported, this week one of my Senate colleagues introduced a measure to strip all military installations and bases in this country of reference to Confederate soldiers or Confederate history. And for what purpose? To achieve justice for

George Floyd? To bring our Nation together? No, I don't think so. The purpose was to erase from history—erase every person and name and event not righteous enough—and to cast those who would object as defenders of the cause of slavery, to reenact in our current politics that Civil War that tore brother from brother and divided this Nation against itself.

You would think, the way some in the media talk about this country, that they are sad we are still not fighting the Civil War. They would like us to fight a new civil war in our culture day and night, without end.

I would suggest to my colleagues that the Civil War not only gave us villains, it also gave us heroes and a more perfect union to love. Maybe we should learn from those heroes.

We should learn from Lincoln, who called our Nation to unity at Gettysburg. "It is for the living," he told us, "to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

If you visit Gettysburg, you will find monuments to the dead of free States and slave States alike, and you will see children who are brought there by their parents after long car drives from their homes, drawn in by these old symbols and memorials to the lessons those teach about our Nation's new birth of freedom.

The Americans who visit these hallowed grounds all across our country want to know why this Nation fought a war against itself, why brothers could not live under one flag together. We teach them there in those places how we became a better nation through the crucible of that terrible war, and we teach them there to be proud that we did so.

That hard-fought pride in the shared struggle that unites us is now fading. That story is being erased. A nation united in the cause of justice is dividing, and we are increasingly at war with ourselves. This cannot continue. This great Nation and its good people cannot continue our life of freedom together if we vilify and destroy each other from within.

Now, before we vote on this floor on the National Defense Authorization Act, I will offer an amendment to undo this effort at historical revisionism. I will offer it not to celebrate the cause of the Confederacy but to embrace the cause of union—our union, shared together as Americans.

It is time for our leaders to stop using their position here to divide us.

Let us work together instead to build on the history and the responsibility that we share as Americans to continue that unfinished work of this Nation that we call home.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I just want to make sure that people understand we are tracking a 1 a.m. vote before I get into some of these bills. Again, we are tracking a 1 a.m. vote.

CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF CUBAN DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST JOSE DANIEL FERRER AND COMMENDING THE EFFORTS OF JOSE DANIEL FERRER TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN CUBA

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 467, S. Res. 454.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 454) calling for the immediate release of Cuban democracy activist Jose Daniel Ferrer and commending the efforts of Jose Daniel Ferrer to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cuba.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations with an amendment to strike all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in italic and with an amendment to the preamble to strike the preamble and insert the part printed in italic, as follows:

Whereas José Daniel Ferrer García is a Cuban democracy and human rights activist who has dedicated his life to promoting greater political pluralism and respect for fundamental freedoms in Cuba;

Whereas Mr. Ferrer was born in Cuba on July 29, 1970, in the province of Santiago de Cuba;

Whereas, in the late 1990s, Mr. Ferrer joined the Christian Liberation Movement (MCL), a peaceful political movement led by late Cuban activist Oswaldo Paya;

Whereas, through coordination with the MCL, Mr. Ferrer helped lead the Varela Project, an initiative to collect the signatures of citizens to petition the Government of Cuba for democratic reforms and protections for freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly;

Whereas, in March 2003, as part of a series of sweeping arrests of 75 democracy activists, Mr. Ferrer was arrested by Cuban authorities for his work on the Varela Project and sentenced to 25 years in prison;

Whereas, in March 2004, Amnesty International declared the group of 75 democracy activists, including Mr. Ferrer, to be prisoners of conscience and called for their immediate and unconditional release;

Whereas, in 2009, Mr. Ferrer was honored with the Democracy Award given annually by the National Endowment for Democracy;

Whereas, in March 2011, as part of an agreement brokered by the Catholic Church, Mr. Ferrer refused to abandon his homeland and was released from prison to remain in Cuba;

Whereas, in August 2011, Mr. Ferrer founded the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU), a non-violent political movement dedicated to promoting human rights, democratic principles, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba;

Whereas, on June 7, 2012, Mr. Ferrer testified via digital video conference at a hearing of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

Whereas, since he was released from jail in March 2011, Mr. Ferrer has been frequently harassed, regularly surveilled, and repeatedly jailed by Cuban authorities for his role in UNPACU;

Whereas, on October 1, 2019, Mr. Ferrer was imprisoned arbitrarily by Cuban authorities for his leadership of UNPACU and outspoken advocacy for human rights and democratic principles in Cuba;

Whereas, on October 1, 2019, Cuban authorities detained 3 other members of UNPACU, Fernando González Vailant, José Pupo Chaveco, and Roilan Zarraga Ferrer;

Whereas the family of Mr. Ferrer was permitted to visit him only twice while he was imprisoned arbitrarily, and the wife of Mr. Ferrer reported that she saw evidence that he had been physically abused and mistreated;

Whereas, on April 3, 2020, Mr. Ferrer was arbitrarily convicted and sentenced to 4 years and 6 months of house arrest for the purported crimes of "injuries" and "privation of liberty";

Whereas, on April 3, 2020, Mr. González Vailant, Mr. Pupo Chaveco, and Mr. Zarraga Ferrer were also arbitrarily convicted to multiyear sentences of house arrest; and

Whereas, since he was placed under house arrest, Mr. Ferrer has informed international media outlets that during his time in prison he was subjected to "torture" and "constant humiliation", and denied access to food and medical treatment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

That the Senate—

(1) condemns the arbitrary conviction, sentencing, and imprisonment of leading Cuban democracy and human rights activist José Daniel Ferrer and calls for his immediate and unconditional release;

(2) calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all members of the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU) that have been arbitrarily imprisoned;

(3) commends Mr. Ferrer for his unwavering commitment to advance democratic principles, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba; and

(4) recognizes the important contributions of UNPACU and all of its members for their efforts to promote greater respect for democratic principles, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment to the resolution be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 454), as amended, was agreed to.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble was agreed to.